STEPPING FORWARD.....

ONE SMALL STEP AT A TIME



East Midlands Asbestos Support Team

helping victims of asbestos-related diseases and their families. Formerly known as DAST.

Bereavement Magazine Oct - Nov 2026



Post: 1 Rose Hill East, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 1NU
Tel: 01246 380415
Email: emast.admin@emast.org.uk

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Welcome to our Autumn edition of Stepping Forward As the leaves begin to turn, the evenings draw in and we start reaching once again for warmer coats, hot drinks and perhaps the occasional chocolate biscuit, we welcome you to our October and November edition of Stepping Forward.

Autumn can be a beautiful season, but for those who are bereaved it can also bring memories and emotions unexpectedly to the surface. Familiar dates, changing seasons and approaching celebrations can remind us of people we miss and of times that can no longer be quite the same.

Whatever this autumn brings for you, we hope there is something within these pages that offers a little comfort, companionship or simply a welcome distraction.

This edition has a real mixture. We look back at Halloween traditions and harvest time, reflect on Bonfire Night and remembrance, and share some very personal thoughts about living with grief as the years pass. There are also plenty of lighter moments, with our Book Club, gardening and cookery pages, puzzles and news from our bereavement support groups. As always, there is no right or wrong way to grieve, and no timetable that anyone has to follow. Some days may be difficult; others may surprise you with a smile, a laugh or a happy memory. All of those days are part of finding our own way forward.

So make yourself a cuppa, find a comfortable chair and dip into the magazine whenever you feel like it. You do not have to read it from beginning to end — just take from it whatever you need today.

From all of us at EMAST, take care of yourselves and each other this autumn.

Remembrance Sunday

For many of us, the familiar sight of the red poppy has become one of the strongest symbols of remembrance. Inspired by the poppies that grew on the battlefields of the First World War, it represents both remembrance and hope.

But Remembrance Sunday is not only about events recorded in history books. Behind every name carved into a memorial was a person: a son or daughter, husband or wife, parent, sibling, friend or neighbour. For many families, those names remain part of their own story.

That is perhaps why remembrance can feel so personal. Bereavement reminds us that a life is never simply a date or a name. We remember voices, expressions, stories, habits and all those ordinary moments that made somebody who they were.

Some people will attend a public service. Others may watch the national ceremony on television, wear a poppy, visit a memorial or simply spend a quiet moment thinking about those who served. However we choose to mark the day, the act of remembering matters.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them.







Are you a member of a community group or union branch?

Perhaps Rotary, WI, RAOB, Masonic Lodge, Inner Wheel, Oddfellows, U3A etc?

The Team at EMAST are always happy to come along to your group to give a talk.

We can speak about EMAST and our work, the history of asbestos, justice for asbestos victims or welfare benefits and compensation.

Please contact the office to find out more or to book a speaker for your event.

Speakers

SHED SPEAK



By Dave Macgregor

Hi guys.

I've gone back to the old name this month.
We had a very hot few weeks and my garden really suffered and is only just recovering. We lost a few plants, but most have recovered ok. How have your garden's fared?

Yvonne and I went to see the Kynren an epic tale of England, this is an action packed show outdoors spanning 2000 years of history from Boudicca to the battle of Britain. The show park is in County Durham and is well worth a visit, a must see for adults and children alike. Search it on the internet but don't watch it on You Tube you don't want to spoil the surprises. Tickets for 2027 will be on sale shortly.



Well time is flying again this year, kids are back to school, Halloween will soon be here, our clocks go back, quickly followed by bonfire night.

Christmas will soon be upon us!
Having said that most shops already have their Christmas goods out on display.

Christmas time brings all sorts of emotions out in people with both happy and sad memories. I have been there on my journey, along with many others. A lot say the first Christmas is the worst, I say that's not always true, some find it may be a Christmas many years later on in your journey, for those around you it can appear as though life carries on as if nothing has happened.

Is that true? good question, they could be good at putting that brave face on. I would say that that nearly all bereaved people put a brave face on at some point if asked are you OK, do you need anything. How are you coping. Their reply is often: I'm fine, I'm muddling through etc, etc.

Have you thought about what you would like to do over the Christmas period? Most of us have family and friends and will be asked to join them, great if you do. If you don't feel you can then Christmas could be a long and lonely time.... or not, because we are all different. Time alone can sometimes help but it is easy to fall into a feeling of being lost as time moves on.

For me I would recommend go to families and friends if asked, it's only for a day. Join in the fun talk and I'm sure you will feel loads better.

Derby Bereavement group are having their Christmas meal on the 16th December and have asked the Nottingham group if they would like to join us should be good fun.

Until next time stay safe.

Regards
Dave



Halloween Then and Now: A Little Bit of Magic in the Dark

Halloween has certainly changed over the years.

These days, shops are filled with plastic pumpkins, flashing skeletons and elaborate costumes. But for many older readers, Halloween memories are much simpler: cold autumn evenings, homemade fancy dress, apple bobbing and perhaps a ghost created from an old bedsheet. And somehow, that was quite enough.

Before Pumpkins Took Over

Before pumpkins became popular, turnips were often carved into lanterns in Britain and Ireland. Anyone who remembers trying to hollow one out will know it required determination, a strong spoon and plenty of patience.

The finished result, though, could be wonderfully spooky. A candle flickering behind a roughly carved face was often all that was needed to create the perfect Halloween atmosphere. Pumpkins may be easier, but battling with a stubborn turnip is a memory many will still recognise.

Homemade Halloween

Fancy dress was once a much simpler affair. A witch might wear an old black skirt and a cardboard hat. A vampire needed little more than a dark coat and some imagination. A ghost, of course, required a spare sheet — preferably one that nobody minded having two eye holes cut into. There were no professional make-up kits or elaborate costumes. If something looked slightly wonky, that simply added to the charm.

Halloween parties were equally uncomplicated. Apple bobbing was always popular, although it usually resulted in wet hair, soaked collars and at least one family member treating the whole thing like a competitive sport.Spooky stories were another favourite. A darkened room and a torch held under the chin could be more frightening than any expensive special effect.

A Knock at the Door

Trick-or-treating became much more common in the UK in later years. Some may remember older traditions such as guising, when children dressed up and offered a song, joke or rhyme in return for a treat. The rewards were usually modest: a few sweets, an apple or perhaps a small coin. Today, neighbourhoods can fill with witches, skeletons, superheroes and assorted monsters carrying buckets and bags. Hoping for sweets!



Autumn Evenings

Part of Halloween's charm is the time of year itself.

By late October, the evenings have drawn in, leaves crunch underfoot and coats have returned from the back of the wardrobe.

And whatever decade you grew up in, one Halloween tradition remains completely reliable: the British weather.



Passing Traditions On

One of the nicest things about Halloween is seeing old traditions enjoyed by a new generation. Perhaps grandchildren are carving pumpkins at the kitchen table while you explain that turnips were much harder. Perhaps their costumes are far more impressive than anything available years ago. The details may have changed, but much of the fun remains the same: imagination, family, laughter and a little harmless silliness on a dark autumn evening.

Halloween does not have to mean noisy parties or frightening films. It might simply be lighting a pumpkin, watching an old favourite on television, telling a spooky story or enjoying something sweet. We may have swapped turnips for pumpkins and homemade masks for shop-bought costumes, but the pleasure of sharing a little fun as the nights draw in has not changed very much at all.

And if there are a few chocolates left over afterwards? Well, it would be a terrible shame to waste them.



Gathering In: Why Harvest Still Matters

From corn dollies and church festivals to blackberry folklore and the comforting smell of something baking, harvest has always been about far more than bringing in the crops. This year, however, there is good reason to pause before we celebrate — as our farmers have had one of the toughest seasons in living memory.

There is something deeply reassuring about harvest time.

Perhaps it is the sight of golden fields beneath a lowering autumn sun, the first blackberries to pick in the hedgerows, the sudden need to make soup despite having shown absolutely no interest in soup since approximately March.

Harvest marks that lovely turn in the year when summer begins to loosen its grip and we collectively remember the existence of jumpers, crumbles and Sunday afternoons indoors.

Yet beneath all the cosy imagery lies something much older and more important. Harvest is about food, survival and community — and about our dependence on the natural world, however far removed from the farm gate most of us may feel.

A celebration as old as the fields

For centuries, bringing in the harvest was one of the defining moments of the year. In medieval farming communities, almost everyone could be called upon to help cut, bind and cart cereal crops during August and early September. The success of those few frantic weeks helped determine what food would be available during the winter ahead.

Unsurprisingly, plenty of customs grew around it.

Lammas, traditionally observed at the beginning of August, marked the gathering of the first fruits of the season, while old harvest traditions included making corn dollies from straw. In some areas these figures were kept safely through the winter before being returned to the fields at sowing time — part craft project, part ancient insurance policy for next year's crop.

Then there was Michaelmas on 29 September, traditionally associated with the end of harvest and the beginning of autumn proper. Goose was once the celebratory meal of choice, supposedly bringing financial good fortune for the coming year. British folklore even offers a deadline for blackberry picking: by Old Michaelmas Day on October 11th, the Devil was said to have ruined the remaining fruit after landing rather unfortunately in a bramble bush.
It is perhaps the most colourful explanation ever devised for an overripe blackberry.

From the field to the village hall
The Harvest Festival many of us remember from school — complete with hymns, wheatsheaves and a mysterious collection of donated tins — is a more recent tradition.

The Church of England traces the modern Harvest Thanksgiving particularly to the Revd R. S. Hawker, a Cornish parish priest who adapted older harvest customs in 1843 and chose the first Sunday in October for a Christian thanksgiving. The celebration spread quickly and was formally recognised by the Church of England in 1862.
The tins, incidentally, have proved rather useful. Modern harvest festivals frequently collect long-life food and toiletries for food banks and community organisations, turning the old idea of sharing the year's abundance into something immediately practical.

And perhaps that gets to the heart of harvest. It has always been a mixture of gratitude and uncertainty: celebrating what has grown, while knowing that next year's weather is beyond anyone's control.



This year, that uncertainty has been painfully visible.

A harvest under extraordinary pressure

For many British farmers, 2026 has been devastatingly difficult.
Months of exceptional heat and prolonged dry weather have left crops struggling for moisture and grass failing to grow. By late August, the National Farmers' Union was describing farmers and growers as being at a financial “crisis point”, with the organisation characterising the drought as the worst in 50 years. Some field crops have failed through lack of water, while livestock and dairy farmers have had to use supplies normally saved for winter because there has simply not been enough grass.
Even the timing of harvest tells a story. Crops ripened so rapidly in the heat that many farms began combining exceptionally early. Early national figures put average wheat yields at around 6.8 tonnes per hectare, compared with 7.2 tonnes in 2025 and a ten-year average of 7.9 tonnes. Results vary considerably according to soil, location and access to moisture — and oilseed rape has provided a welcome bright spot in some places — but the overall picture for many growers has been deeply challenging.

The heat has also created a frightening additional hazard: fire.
With fields and grassland tinder-dry, wildfires and crop fires have threatened livestock, standing crops, machinery, homes and livelihoods. The NFU warned in August that fires were already damaging crops and affecting food production. Across the Midlands, July and August brought dozens of incidents: a long-running moorland blaze engulfed more than 885 hectares around parts of Derbyshire and Saddleworth Moor, while elsewhere fires destroyed hay bales and standing crops. Farmers themselves have joined efforts to create firebreaks and help slow advancing flames.
It is difficult to reconcile those scenes with the postcard image of harvest: a combine moving peacefully through amber wheat beneath a blue sky. But perhaps we shouldn't try.

Gratitude without the rose-tinted spectacles

There is nothing wrong with enjoying the romance of autumn. By all means light the cinnamon candle. Pick the apples. Make the crumble. Buy the ludicrously large pumpkin and spend October wondering what on earth to do with it. But harvest offers something more meaningful than seasonal decoration.

It reminds us that food begins somewhere.

A loaf of bread begins with soil, seed, rain, sunlight and somebody willing to gamble months of work against weather they cannot control. A glass of milk depends upon animals that still need feeding when fields stop growing. The vegetables in our Sunday roast have needed water long before they encountered our gravy.

For our wellbeing, too, there may be something valuable in remembering this rhythm. Harvest invites us to notice rather than rush: to recognise what has sustained us, to appreciate the work hidden inside ordinary things and to share what we can.

That might mean buying British produce when it makes sense for us, visiting a farm shop or farmers' market, choosing seasonal fruit and vegetables, supporting rural businesses, donating to a food bank, or simply talking to children about where their dinner actually comes from.

Most of all, perhaps it means allowing gratitude and concern to sit alongside one another.

Harvest has never promised that every year will be abundant. Our ancestors knew that all too well. It is a celebration not of endless plenty, but of gathering what there is, sharing it, giving thanks — and preparing to begin again.

This autumn, as we enjoy the apples, blackberries, bread, squashes and all the other pleasures of the season, there is every reason to celebrate.

Just remember to raise your mug of tea to the people who got them here. They have had quite a year.



Harvest

We gather with thankful hearts
for earth, rain, sun, and seed,
for hands that grow and hands that share,
and all that meets our need.

For autumn fields and golden leaves,
for fruits the seasons bring,
we celebrate the gifts of earth
and every living thing.

May no one face an empty plate,
may all have food and care,
and may we notice those in need
and gladly choose to share.

May we give as we receive,
with kindness, hope, and care,
and remember every harvest
is richer when we share.

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Autumn, Odd Socks and Other Small Comforts

Autumn has a way of arriving without asking permission.

One minute we are complaining that it is too warm, and the next we are standing in the kitchen wondering whether it is officially too early to put the heating on. The leaves begin to turn, the evenings draw in, and suddenly every supermarket seems to contain an alarming number of pumpkins.

For anyone who is grieving, autumn can bring mixed feelings. The changing season can be beautiful, but it can also remind us that time is moving on, whether we feel ready for it or not.

There can be something comforting, though, in the fact that autumn does not expect too much from us.

Spring seems to arrive full of enthusiasm. Everything is growing, blooming and generally showing off. Summer expects picnics, holidays and long evenings outside. Autumn, on the other hand, seems perfectly happy if we make a cup of tea, put on a jumper and sit somewhere comfortable - And sometimes, that is exactly what is needed, the return of the comforting jumper. There is a particular pleasure in rediscovering an old favourite jumper at the back of the wardrobe. It may have stretched slightly in places. It may have a mysterious mark on one sleeve that refuses to disappear. It may, technically speaking, have seen better days - But it is familiar.

When life has changed in ways we never wanted, familiar things can be reassuring. The same mug. The same chair. The same television programme we have watched far too many times.

Comfort does not always arrive in grand gestures. Sometimes it arrives wearing slightly bobbly knitwear.

Walking without a destination

Autumn is also a good season for a gentle walk. There is no need to climb a mountain or achieve a particular number of steps. A short wander around the block or through a local park can be enough.

The trees provide plenty to look at. Conkers appear underfoot. energy than expected.

Squirrels rush around behaving as if they have several urgent appointments. Leaves crunch satisfyingly beneath our shoes.
A walk can give us a little breathing space on difficult days. It does not solve anything, but it can change the scenery for a while.
And if the weather turns against you halfway round, returning home to a hot drink feels even better.

The joy of very small plans

Bereavement can make the future feel overwhelming. Big plans may feel impossible, and even ordinary decisions can sometimes take more energy than xpected. Autumn lends itself well to small plans.
Perhaps tomorrow you will buy a bunch of flowers. Perhaps at the weekend you will make soup. Perhaps you will ring someone you have been meaning to call, or watch an old film, or finally investigate what is lurking at the bottom of the freezer - Small things count.
Having one pleasant thing to look forward to can make a day feel a little more manageable.

Soup: autumn's answer to everything

There are few foods as forgiving as soup. Almost anything can become soup if you put it in a saucepan for long enough. Carrots looking slightly tired? Soup. Half an onion? Soup. Potato that needs using? Definitely soup. It does not need to be impressive.
The important thing is that it is warm, easy and goes well with bread.
Cooking something simple can also provide a gentle sense of achievement. On days when energy is low, even making toast can feel like a victory. There is no prize for complicated cooking.

Letting the season do what it does

Perhaps one of autumn's quieter lessons is that letting go is part of nature. The trees do not appear particularly embarrassed about dropping their leaves everywhere. They simply do it.
Grief is not as simple as a season, of course. There is no timetable for it and no moment when someone should suddenly feel "better".
But autumn can remind us that change, rest and renewal are all part of life.

Some days may feel heavy. Others may contain an unexpected laugh, a good conversation or a memory that brings warmth instead of tears. Both kinds of days belong.
So as the evenings grow darker, perhaps the aim does not need to be doing more. Perhaps it can simply be noticing the small comforts: a bright autumn tree, a friendly dog on a walk, a favourite biscuit, a warm radiator, a phone call from someone who cares.

And, of course, finally finding the matching sock.








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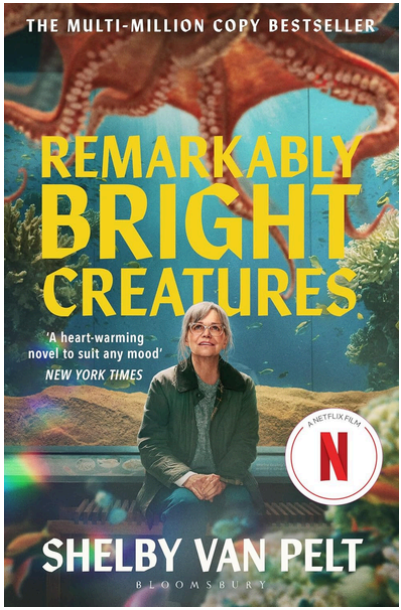
How did you find Khaled Hosseini's book The Kite Runner? I know that it was a difficult and harrowing read at times!

At its heart, The Kite Runner is a powerful novel about friendship, guilt, betrayal and redemption. It follows Amir, a boy growing up in Afghanistan, and his close friend Hassan, whose loyalty Amir fails to repay after a traumatic event. Years later, after moving to America, Amir is given a chance to confront his past and make amends. The novel explores the lasting impact of guilt, the complexities of family and friendship, and the possibility of redemption. I loved this book and it will certainly be one I will read again.

Our next book recommendation is **Remarkably Bright Creatures: A Novel by Shelby Van Pelt.** Hailed as a charming, witty and compulsively readable exploration of friendship, reckoning, and hope that traces a widow's unlikely connection with a giant Pacific octopus! After Tova Sullivan's husband died, she began working the night shift at the Sowell Bay Aquarium, mopping floors and tidying up. Keeping busy has always helped her cope, which she's been doing since her eighteen-year-old son, Erik, mysteriously vanished on a boat in Puget Sound over thirty years ago. Tova becomes acquainted with curmudgeonly Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus living at the aquarium. Marcellus knows more than anyone can imagine but wouldn't dream of lifting one of his eight arms for his human captors — until he forms a remarkable friendship with Tova. Ever the detective, Marcellus deduces what happened the night Tova's son disappeared. And now Marcellus must use every trick his old invertebrate body can muster to unearth the truth for her before it's too late. Shelby Van Pelt's debut novel is a gentle reminder that sometimes taking a hard look at the past can help uncover a future that once felt impossible.

- What did you think of Marcellus as a narrator? Did his point of view add something special to the story?
- Which character did you feel most connected to, and why?
- Tova is dealing with grief, loneliness and ageing. How did you feel about the way the book handled these themes?
- Why do you think Tova finds it easier to connect with Marcellus than with some of the people around her?
- How did your opinion of Cameron change as the story developed?
- The novel is full of characters who are lonely in different ways. How does each of them deal with loneliness?
- Did you work out the connection between the characters before it was revealed? Did knowing or suspecting it affect your enjoyment of the story?
- Marcellus often understands the humans around him better than they understand themselves. What do you think the author is saying about human behaviour?
- How important are friendship and community in helping the characters move forward?
- The book deals with quite sad subjects but is also warm and humorous. Did you think the balance worked?
- What did you think of the ending? Was it satisfying, or would you have liked anything to turn out differently?
- The title is Remarkably Bright Creatures. Who do you think the title refers to — Marcellus, the human characters, or both?

A nice final question: “If you had to describe this book in three words, what would they be?”



Before and After: Four Years Into Grief



In December, it will be four years.
How can that be?
Four years sounds like such a long time, and yet in my mind it can still feel like yesterday. I no longer seem to mark time in years, or even months. Time has become divided into two distinct parts: “before and after”.
Before he died.
After he died.
There are days when I stare at myself in the mirror and try to work out who I am. My appearance has changed. My identity has changed. My life has changed. Hell, everything has changed.
And yet, beyond the small circle of my own world, so much appears exactly the same.
Day follows day. People go to work. They laugh and cry and play. Birthdays are celebrated, holidays are taken, plans are made. The seasons come and go and the world continues turning on its axis, apparently oblivious to the fact that one particular person is no longer here.
And yet, for me, everything is different.
All too often, I still feel stuck in the sadness.
Grief can feel as though you are wrapped tightly in something you cannot see. You are still able to move. You walk, talk, breathe and eat. You go through the motions of everyday life. You may even laugh — properly laugh — and for a moment surprise yourself. But you cannot quite peel away that feeling wrapped around you. It clings to you.
Eventually, it becomes part of you, and there are times when it feels as though you will never again be able to walk through life without that sense of heaviness, that invisible tightness around your chest, that feeling that you are somehow breathing through something.both can be true.

When my special person died, I lost so much more than his physical presence.
I lost the person who knew me in a way nobody else did. I lost part of my own identity. I lost my sense of safety and my feeling of home. I lost confidence in myself and, for a time, even the ability to make the simplest decisions. I lost friendships and acquaintances I thought would remain. I lost routines, expectations, plans and the future I had imagined.
Perhaps most painfully, I lost my sense of purpose.

Nobody really tells you about those secondary losses. The death itself is enormous, but surrounding it are dozens of smaller deaths: the life you expected to have, the person you were when they were beside you, the places that no longer feel the same, the conversations you will never have and the version of yourself that existed only within that relationship.
But, reluctantly, I have to acknowledge that over these four years I have also gained things.
I hesitate to use the word “gained”, because nothing I have learned could ever compensate for what I lost. I would give every lesson back in an instant to have him here.
But grief has changed me, and not every change has been a loss. I have gained a deeper understanding of how fragile life is and, because of that, how precious ordinary moments can be. I notice things I might once have rushed past. A conversation. A quiet cup of coffee. Somebody remembering his name. A message arriving on a difficult day. Sunlight through a window. The relief of finding myself laughing without immediately feeling guilty for it.
I have discovered a strength I never wanted to have to find.
There have been countless moments when I have thought, “I cannot do this”, only to realise later that somehow I did. Not elegantly. Not bravely. Sometimes not particularly well. But I did it.
I have learned that courage does not always look courageous.

Sometimes courage is getting out of bed. Sometimes it is walking into a room alone when you once entered it as two. Sometimes it is making a decision when the person you would have discussed it with is no longer there. Sometimes it is simply allowing yourself to have a good day.

I have gained compassion, too. Grief has made me much more aware of the battles people carry quietly. I understand now that someone can look perfectly fine while carrying unbearable sadness. I am less inclined to assume and more inclined to listen.

I have also learned who is able to stand beside pain without trying to make it disappear. Those people are precious.

Because I have no advice for anyone travelling their own grief journey. How could I?

Every relationship is different, every loss is different and every person grieves differently. What helps one person may be unbearable for another. There is no correct timetable. There is no right or wrong way to do this. There is no competition and certainly no race towards some imaginary finishing line where grief is finally completed and we receive a certificate declaring ourselves healed.

Perhaps there isn't a finishing line at all.

Perhaps we simply learn, gradually, to carry what happened.

Some days we carry it more easily than others.

What can help, though, is having people who are willing to listen.

Not people who try to fix you.

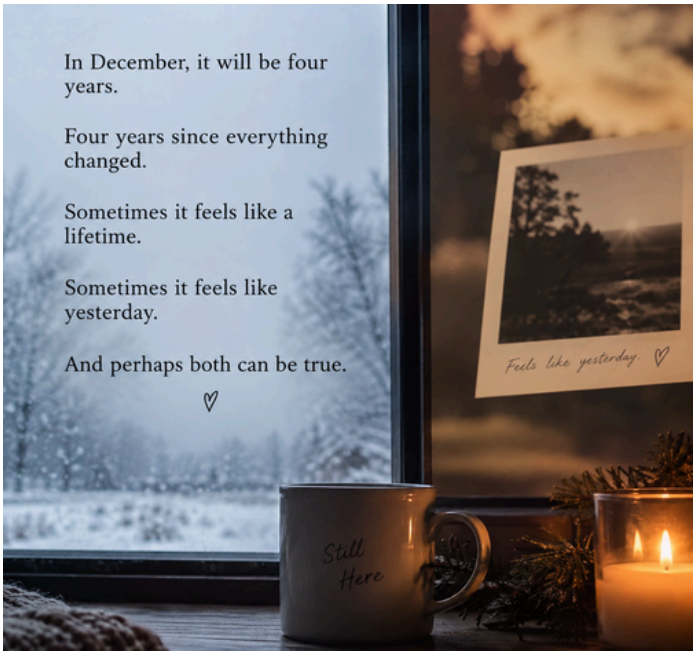
Not people who tell you what you should be doing by now, or remind you how much time has passed, or search desperately for something positive to say because your sadness makes them uncomfortable.

Just people who hear you.

People who allow you to say the same thing for the hundredth time because perhaps, on that particular day, you need to say it for the hundredth time.

People who validate what you are feeling rather than trying to talk you out of it.

People who understand that mentioning the person who died does not remind you that they are dead. You have not forgotten.
People who can say their name.
People who are able to sit quietly alongside you when there are simply no words.
Four years on, I am still learning who I am in this strange landscape of “after”.
There are parts of the person I was that I miss terribly. There are parts of the person I am becoming that I am only beginning to recognise.
The sadness remains. I suspect some part of it always will, because grief exists only because love existed first.
But alongside the sadness there are other things now.
There is gratitude. There is resilience. There is greater tenderness towards other people. There are memories that sometimes bring a smile before they bring tears. There are moments of genuine joy. There is an appreciation of the ordinary. And, slowly, there is the understanding that continuing to live does not mean leaving someone behind.



When the Night Lights Up : Grief and Bonfire Night

Bonfire Night has a way of announcing itself. Even before the fifth of November arrives, the signs begin: the first sharp crack of a firework in the distance, supermarket shelves filled with sparklers, posters advertising local displays, and the familiar smell of smoke on cold evening air. For many people, it is a night of excitement and tradition. Families wrap up in coats and scarves, children wave sparklers in the dark, and crowds gather beneath skies filled with colour.

But when you are grieving, familiar celebrations can feel very different. Grief has a habit of changing the meaning of ordinary things. Dates, seasons, songs and traditions that once passed without much thought can suddenly carry enormous emotional weight. Bonfire Night can be one of those occasions. Perhaps it was something you always did together. Maybe you stood side by side at the same local display every year, shared hot chocolate while waiting for the fireworks to begin, or watched from the kitchen window at home.

Perhaps your memories are less specific. It may simply be the atmosphere of the evening — the darkness, the cold, the noise and the sudden bursts of light — that brings someone to mind. Grief does not always arrive through obvious anniversaries. Sometimes it appears in moments we did not expect. A firework explodes overhead, and for a second you remember exactly where they would have stood.
You hear children laughing and remember another November years ago. You smell woodsmoke and find yourself transported back to a time when life felt completely different.

Neither means that the person has been forgotten. Perhaps Bonfire Night offers a gentle reminder of something many bereaved people come to understand over time: love and loss do not cancel each other out. The sadness exists because the relationship mattered.
The memories remain because the person mattered.

And sometimes, even in the darkest season of the year, a brief flash of light is enough to remind us that they still do.These moments can be comforting. They can also hurt.
Often, they are both.

When celebration and sadness exist together

One of the difficult things about bereavement is discovering that emotions rarely arrive neatly. You may enjoy an evening with friends and still miss the person who is no longer there. You may smile at a memory and cry moments later. You might decide to attend a fireworks display and find yourself suddenly overwhelmed.
None of these reactions are unusual. Grief does not require us to choose between remembering and living. It is possible to feel sadness and enjoyment at the same time. In fact, occasions such as Bonfire Night can sometimes reveal how closely those emotions sit beside one another. There may be laughter around you while you feel a quiet ache inside. There may be a beautiful sky above you while your mind is somewhere else entirely. Both experiences can be real.

The symbolism of light in darkness

There is something powerful about watching light appear against a dark November sky. Perhaps this is one reason Bonfire Night can feel especially poignant after someone has died. A firework exists only briefly. It rises, flashes brilliantly, and disappears. Yet for those few seconds, everyone looks towards it. Memory can sometimes feel similar. A person may no longer be physically present in our lives, but their influence can appear unexpectedly — in the things they taught us, the stories we tell, the habits we inherited, or the way we still hear their voice in our minds. There are moments when it is loud and impossible to ignore, and others when it becomes a quieter presence in the background of everyday life.
Their life cannot be reduced to the fact that it ended.
Just as darkness does not erase the light that came before it, death does not erase the significance of a life.

Those were the days...

Read on for our final instalment of memories shared by friends and beneficiaries of EMAST.

Pete and I began with tents, and progressed to a caravan and then a motorhome. One of our favourite places was Northumberland, at that time it was an undiscovered county, a beautiful place where you parked up overlooking the sea without the maddening crowds. We parked up one day when a little girl asked for an ice cream! Her father explained that we were not an ice cream van, I only wished I had an ice cream on board for her.



Our son settled in Holland and we used to visit them every year in the motorhome. Once, Pete decided to take a crate of his popular home brewed beer, which travelled on the floor in the centre of the motorhome. Just as we turned into the street where they lived some of the bottles decided to crack — beer everywhere. I banned his beer from future trips but unbeknown to me one weekend, he sneaked a couple of bottles into the wardrobe - and guess what - yes, they burst. I started my weekend by doing the washing.

Susan Wilson

My career as a scout lasted less than a year- it was immediately replaced by an interest/passion for the Youth Hostel Association. First, plan a walking adventure: find the appropriate Hostel accommodation that matches your route, book it, bookings confirmed, wait excitedly for the Easter Holiday (1962) and off you go. 'Dubbined' boots, two pairs of thick woolly socks, a green bobble hat for the 'I've been to' badges, bus into Leek and suddenly you own the whole of the Peak District - or at least that part of it which fits onto your brand new Ordinance Survey linen backed map! I did Rudyard, Oakenclough, and Ravenstor (Buxton) during the Easter holiday and the Peak District Trail from Edale and Castleton in the north, to Ilam and The Ranger in Dimmingsdale in the south, where my parents arrived on a Sunday 'run' to see if we had enough bread. Embarrassing. The following year it was Cardigan Bay with a group of school friends on bikes, six of us.



one of our first practice runs, sweeping down a gentle, straight, long, empty country road, I'd swung round in my saddle to warn whoever was behind that there was a heron on the road - "There's a heron on the —"...CRASH!!!! I ran into the bike in front and the two bikes behind ran into me. A mess of twisted wheels and grazed flesh. Dad and a van got us home!
Dave Brown

We were really lucky as children, my brother and I, as my parents would take us on holiday most summers and we mostly stayed in Cornwall or Wales. We would travel down in the car overnight, it would be mainly A roads as I remember with a stint on the motorway. The rule was no sweets until we got on the motorway and I would look for signs that we were getting on it from the moment we left the house! My brother and I had sleeping bags which we would get in as soon as we got in the car. My mum took charge of the sweets and snacks and a flask of tea in the front with my dad driving. We would stop at Exeter so my dad could sleep, although sometimes it was difficult as you could hear the cars and lorries driving by. The caravans we stayed in would be cosy and it was exciting to unpack our things. The thing I remember being excited about the most was a multi pack of mini Kelloggs cereal boxes for breakfast, this was a real treat!
Clare Griffiths

I think that I belong to the gas fire generation! It's strange to think how recent an invention central heating is, because we now take it for granted. But I remember our family moving into a newly built bungalow in 1982, and it did not include central heating as part of the fixtures and fittings. We got our hot water from an immersion heater — so you had to plan ahead if you wanted a bath. And all source of heat was the gas fire in the living room. I remember on winter mornings getting dressed into my school clothes in front of the fire. Mum would lay my clothes out on the floor in front of the fire while I brushed my teeth, then I would put them on quickly, while they still retained a bit of heat. We needed plenty of blankets at night! I can remember the sound and the smell of the fire now. When I tell my teenage children about this (especially having to plan ahead for a bath), they are astonished!
Sarah Walters

Nowadays many people have double glazing and I remember how grateful I was when my parents had it installed when I was growing up at home. I can still remember early mornings in the winter, getting up when it was dark and getting dressed practically on top of the radiator where, if I had remembered to put my clothes the night before, my toasty warm school uniform sat waiting for me. I also remember on extremely cold and icy mornings the condensation would turn to ice inside the window and I would pick this off and eat it. I think I must've been quite a strange child, as I would also wear mittens on my feet inside my boots/wellies to keep my toes warm. My school lessons took place in mobile classrooms which were essentially a glorified shed! My toes would be so cold and the extra socks and mittens seemed to help.
Clare Griffiths



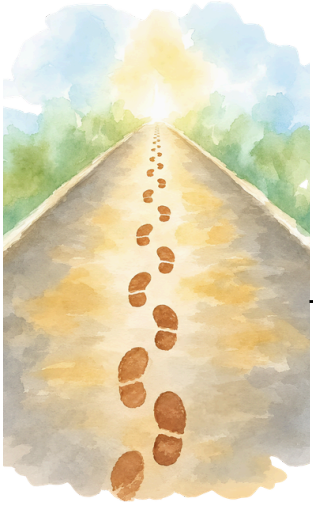
When I was young, growing up in London's East End, my favourite meal was a stew made using Foster Clark's Tomato Soup Powder. It was about a 2 inches square cube and encased in paper. It was crumbled like an Oxo cube and added to boiling water. The taste was heavenly. I can remember the flavour to this day. In the kitchen of our house, we had a copper, a mangle and a dimpled-glass wooden framed scrubbing board to wash the clothes clean. The copper was free-standing, it had an enamelled metal exterior that supported the inner can or copper and had a lid. The copper would be filled with soapy water; the clothes added and put on to boil to clean the clothes. The clothes were removed using a wooden stemmed large tweezers. Once the clothes had boiled and were clean, the tweezers were used to extract the clothes into the sink to be rinsed. Once the clothes had been rinsed free of the soapy water they were fed through the mangle to squeeze out the water. One day, my mother had filled the copper with soapy water and had added the clothes when she caught sight of the fish tank and decided to quickly change the water in the tank and clean it. As she scooped the fish in her hands to transfer it into waiting clean water, the fish jumped out of her hands into the copper full of clothes, before it had been switched on! Mum had to take out and inspect each piece of clothing for the fish until eventually she found it. Once in the clear water it started releasing bubbles through its gills and passing a lot of excrement! The fish recovered well and lived a long time after its adventure.
Denise Healy



One of my favourite foods when I was growing up were Mums homemade bread cakes, they had to be eaten straight away, as they didn't keep well, but that wasn't a problem as they were delicious, and made the house smell lovely! Among the strikes in the 1970s were bread strikes, so I used Mum's bread recipe. I made the bread and left it to prove on top of the oven, then did a few more jobs before realising my wedding ring was not on my finger! With hindsight it's obvious where it was, but I had once lost it whilst making the bed (it was under the pillow) so I searched high and low. Eventually I realised where it was, the only problem was there were 4 nice round puffed up little loaves which would be spoilt with my poking about. I was fairly lucky, got it in the second one. It was such a relief to find it, and the bread tasted ok!

Elizabeth Walters

Thank you to everyone who contributed their stories!
Do you have a memory you'd like to share? Email it to us
emast.admin@emast.org.uk



Memory Lane

I took a walk down memory lane,
And found you there once more,
In quiet smiles and gentle words,
In moments from before.

Though time moves on and seasons change,
Some things remain the same —
Love leaves footprints on the heart,
Along our memory lane.

East Midlands Asbestos Support Team

Join the EMAST 200 Club today!



Congratulations to Carol Harvey who won June's draw which was a whopping 3 months of winnings - almost £300! Carol very generously donated £100 of her winnings back to EMAST. Thank you Carol! July was another rollover month and the August draw was won by Corrin Lucey. Congratulations to both Carol and Corrin!

To join or purchase additional numbers, please get in touch at admin.assistant@emast.org.uk or 01246 380 415. Numbers are £2 each per month, with each month's winner receiving half the proceeds and EMAST receiving the other half.
Thank you to all our members for your participation and support - regular donations really make a difference to our small charity.



Benefits of Bereavement Support Groups

Bereavement can feel incredibly isolating, even when we are surrounded by people who care about us.
A bereavement group offers a safe space to meet others who understand something of what loss can feel like. Simply being with people who “get it” can bring comfort, reassurance and a sense of connection at a time when life may feel very different.

These groups can also give people the opportunity to talk openly, listen to others, share memories and learn ways of coping with difficult days. There is no pressure to speak before you are ready, and there is no single right way to grieve. For many people, knowing they are not alone can make the journey through bereavement feel a little less overwhelming.
It doesn't matter whether your loss was last week or 20 years ago. It doesn't disappear because everyone else thinks you should be "over it."

Our Bereavement Support Groups are simply safe spaces where you can come as you are. No awkward icebreakers. No pressure to talk. No judgement. Just people who get it, a brew, and a safe place to be for an hour or two.

If you've been thinking, "Maybe I should go..." this is your sign. And if you know someone who's struggling, share this with them. It might be exactly what they need. 💙

STEPPING STONES BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS

KETTERING



Here are some of the lovely people who come to our Kettering group. We have a lovely venue in the Loasby Room at St Andrew's Church, Lindsay Street, Kettering NN16 8RG

We meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 11.30. A light lunch will be provided. The dates for upcoming meetings are: **13th October, 10th November & 8th December**

DERBY



Our Derby group meets up for lunch at **The Silk Mill pub** at 19 Full Street, Derby DE1 3AF, on the 3rd Wednesday each month, 12 noon - 2pm.

Our upcoming meetings are: **21st October, 18th November & 16th December**

There is a lovely light bites lunch menu as well as a comprehensive main menu. Please come and join us.

Newcomers are always welcomed at all our groups. If you are nervous about attending, bring a friend or contact Jo Reeve at the office who will meet you outside.

STEPPING STONES BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS

NOTTINGHAM



Our Nottingham group meets in the church hall at the rear of St Peter's Church, St Peter's Gate Nottingham NG1 2NW

We meet on the last Friday of each month 10am - 12

The dates for upcoming meetings are: **30th October, 27th November & 29th January**

Come as you are — talk if you want, listen if you prefer
A place for support, friendship and connection.



October & November in the Garden

Preparing for winter and planning for spring

Autumn may signal the end of the main growing season, but October and November are still busy and rewarding months in the garden. A little work now will protect plants through winter and give next year's garden a valuable head start.

Make use of fallen leaves

Fallen leaves soon pile up at this time of year. Clear them regularly from lawns, paths and patios, where they can smother grass or become slippery when wet.

Don't throw them away, though. Leaves make excellent leafmould. Collect damp leaves into a wire container, compost bay or perforated bin bags and leave them to break down. In time, they will produce a rich, crumbly soil conditioner.

There is also no need to make every corner of the garden spotless. Leaves left beneath hedges and at the back of borders provide useful winter shelter for insects and other wildlife.

Plant now for spring colour

Autumn is the ideal time to plant spring-flowering bulbs. Daffodils, crocuses, alliums and hyacinths can all go into the ground during October.

Tulips are best planted a little later, with November being an excellent time to put them in.

Bulbs are just as effective in pots as they are in borders. Try planting several varieties at different depths in one container so that flowers appear over a longer period.

Autumn is also a good time to plant wallflowers, violas, primulas and forget-me-nots for extra colour through winter and spring.



Plant trees, shrubs and hedges

October and November are excellent months for planting many trees, shrubs, roses and hedging plants. The soil is usually still relatively warm from summer, while increased rainfall helps new roots establish.

November also marks the start of the main bare-root planting season, when fruit trees, roses and hedging plants are widely available.

Water newly planted trees and shrubs well and apply a layer of mulch around the roots, keeping it clear of the main stem.

Don’t tidy too much

It can be tempting to cut everything back as soon as plants begin to fade, but leaving some stems and seed heads standing is good for wildlife. Seed heads can provide food for birds, while hollow stems and dense foliage offer shelter for insects. Ornamental grasses and dried flower heads can also look beautiful when covered with frost.

Remove plants that have collapsed into a wet, untidy heap, but leave healthy standing growth where possible until late winter.

Tidy the vegetable garden

Remove finished vegetable plants and add healthy material to the compost heap. Once beds are clear, spread a layer of homemade compost or well-rotted organic matter over the soil. This will help improve its structure and protect the surface during winter.

Garlic can be planted during autumn, while hardy broad beans can be sown in suitable sheltered areas for an early crop next year.

It is also time to harvest and store pumpkins, squash, apples, pears and other remaining crops.

Protect pots and tender plants

Before colder weather arrives, move tender plants into a greenhouse, conservatory or another frost-free place.

Raise outdoor containers onto pot feet or bricks so that excess water can drain away. Waterlogged compost can cause considerable damage during freezing weather.

Grouping pots together near a sheltered wall can also provide extra protection.

Healthy Cooking for One -
Simple ways to eat well without waste

Cooking for one can sometimes feel more difficult than cooking for a family. Recipes often serve four, fresh ingredients can come in large packs, and it can be tempting to rely on ready meals or takeaways. But cooking for yourself can be simple, healthy and economical. With a little planning, you can enjoy varied meals without spending hours in the kitchen or throwing food away.

Plan a few meals, not the whole week

You do not need a detailed seven-day meal plan. Start by choosing three or four meals that use some of the same ingredients.

For example, a bag of spinach could be used in an omelette, added to pasta and stirred into a curry. Peppers might appear in a stir-fry one evening and in a salad or wrap the next day.

Using ingredients in several different ways helps reduce waste while still keeping meals interesting.

Keep useful basics in the cupboard

A well-stocked cupboard makes healthy cooking much easier.

Useful staples include tinned tomatoes, beans, chickpeas, lentils, tuna, wholegrain rice, pasta, couscous, oats and herbs and spices.

Frozen vegetables are also extremely handy. Peas, spinach, broccoli and mixed vegetables can be taken straight from the freezer in exactly the amount you need, so there is very little waste.

Eggs are another useful standby. They can quickly become an omelette, scrambled eggs, frittata or topping for a bowl of vegetables and rice.

Think about balance

A simple way to build a healthy meal is to include plenty of vegetables, a source of protein and a portion of starchy carbohydrate. Protein might come from fish, chicken, eggs, beans, lentils, tofu or yoghurt.

Potatoes, rice, pasta, bread and grains provide carbohydrate, while choosing wholegrain versions where practical can add extra fibre. Try to include different coloured fruit and vegetables through the week rather than worrying about making every individual meal perfect.

Cook once, eat twice

Cooking for one does not have to mean preparing a fresh meal from scratch every night. If you make chilli, curry, soup, stew or pasta sauce, prepare two or three portions. Eat one and freeze the others in individual containers. Label containers with the contents and date so that you know what is waiting in the freezer.

Make friends with your freezer

The freezer is one of the best tools for anyone cooking for one. Bread can be frozen in slices and toasted straight from frozen. Individual portions of meat or fish can be frozen separately, while herbs, leftovers and homemade sauces can also be stored in small quantities. Even ripe bananas can be frozen for smoothies or baking. Freezing food before it goes past its best can save both money and waste.

Make vegetables easy

Healthy eating is much simpler when vegetables require very little effort. Keep vegetables that last well, such as carrots, onions, cabbage and peppers, alongside frozen options. Roasting a tray of mixed vegetables is particularly useful. Eat some with your evening meal, then use the leftovers in a wrap, salad, pasta dish or omelette the following day. Vegetable soup is another excellent way to use odds and ends from the fridge.

Cooking for one should not feel like second-best.

Use a proper plate, sit at the table when you can and make food you genuinely enjoy. Healthy eating is not about producing perfect meals every day. It is about developing simple habits that make nutritious food the easiest option.

With a little planning, a useful freezer and a few dependable ingredients, cooking for one can be varied, affordable and enjoyable.

Puzzle Pages

WINTER FUN













SEASONEDTIMES.COM

ACROSS

5. WINTERY SURFING
6. MOVING IMAGES
7. LENGTHS OF WARMING FABRIC
8. INTERPRETING SYMBOLS FOR MEANING
9. EXPOSING TO DRY HEAT FOR CONSUMPTION

DOWN

1. SNOWY FIGURE
2. CRAFT OF CREATING INTERCONNECTED LOOPS
3. SOURCE OF WARMTH
4. DESIGNED TO SOLVE
7. MOVING ON FLAT RUNNERS

IT'S A MYSTERY





FOR ALL THOSE ARMCHAIR SLEUTHS WHO READ OR WATCH MYSTERIES FOR FUN.
CAN YOU FIGURE OUT ALL THE ELEMENTS OF MYSTERY NEEDED TO FILL IN THE PUZZLE?





SEASONEDTIMES.COM



ACROSS

2. CAMOUFLAGE APPEARANCE
6. BREAKING AND ENTERING
7. ADMISSION
8. POTENTIAL PROOF LEFT BEHIND
10. COVER STORY
11. PERSON WHO LOOKS ON
12. IDENTIFIABLE MARKINGS
14. RED SMEAR OF EVIDENCE
16. ABDUCTION
17. LEGAL MISDEED



DOWN

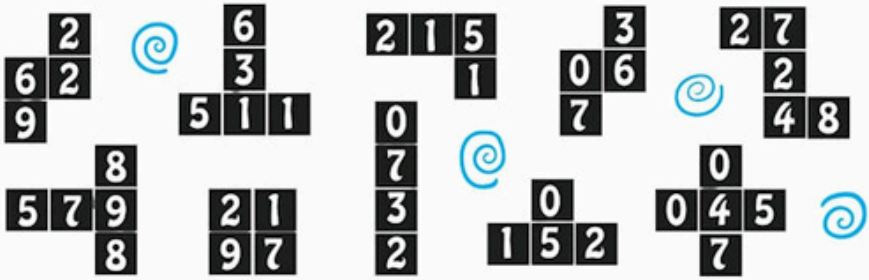
1. A TELLTALE HINT OR SIGN
3. PROBE INTO WRONGDOING
4. PERSON OF INTEREST
5. INNER DRIVE THAT INSPIRES ACTION
6. FINANCIAL DEMAND
9. KEEPING TABS ON SOMEONE
13. REQUESTED PAYOFF FOR RETURN
15. SECRET WATCH OF LOCATION



NUMBER PATTERNS

FIND THE NUMBER PATTERNS IN THE TABLE.

9	4	6	2	1	8	5	7	3	6	0	2	1	3	5	8
4	2	4	7	0	7	2	5	2	6	8	3	7	8	2	1
2	6	2	0	4	5	8	6	2	0	2	6	2	4	8	2
9	1	9	1	7	3	7	9	1	3	9	3	7	1	0	9
1	3	0	5	4	5	6	4	8	4	5	1	1	2	0	1
0	6	2	0	6	2	6	2	6	6	4	8	5	1	5	2
7	9	2	5	0	0	4	3	2	5	3	2	3	2	6	5
7	9	4	5	0	0	4	3	2	5	3	2	3	2	6	5
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4	6	8	2	1	3	5	7	9	0	2	1	3	6	2	0
7	8	7	9	7	9	8	6	8	7	9	8	1	2	3	7
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2	5	1	6	3	2	7	8	2	1	4	2	4	7	8	2
8	5	1	2	3	8	2	0	4	7	3	2	1	9	5	0
2	4	3	4	2	6	4	8	2	6	4	8	2	8	2	5



SEASONEDTIMES.COM

Puzzle Answers



Winter Fun

Number Patterns

9	4	6	2	1	8	5	7	3	6	0	2	1	3	5	8
4	2	4	7	0	7	2	5	2	6	8	3	7	8	2	1
2	6	2	0	4	5	8	6	2	0	2	6	2	4	8	2
9	1	9	1	7	3	7	9	1	3	9	3	7	1	0	9
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8	5	1	2	3	8	2	0	4	7	3	2	1	9	5	0
2	4	3	4	2	6	4	8	2	6	4	8	2	8	2	5

It's a Mystery



WAYS TO HELP EMAST

1. Make a one off or regular donation through our Local Giving page www.localgiving.org/charity/east-midlands-asbestos-support-team
You can also donate by cheque (please use the form at the back of the magazine), bank transfer or standing order.

2. Shopping online? Buy via EasyFundraising and we'll receive a donation at no extra cost to you. They partner with 8,000+ brands, from groceries and electricals to entertainment, travel and insurance. To find out more & sign up go to: https://easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/emast and click Start raising free donations today'

3. Join our 200 Club lottery for just £2 per number per month, with each month's winner receiving half the proceeds and EMAST receiving the other half. To join, email admin.assistant@emast.org.uk or call 01246 380 415

4. Consider making a legacy in your will. EMAST has received much generous support this way. Talk to your solicitor about this and they will give you personalised advice.

5. If you're a UK taxpayer, increase every £1 you donate by 25p by becoming a Gift Aider. There's no extra cost to you and it makes a huge difference to our fundraising. Return the form at the back of the magazine with your donation or contact us for an electronic copy.

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You can also make a payment directly into our bank account:

Name on account: East Midlands Asbestos Support Team
Account number: 20419244
Sort code: 60 - 83 – 01

Or online: www.localgiving.org/charity/east-midlands-asbestos-support-team

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION!